

University of Groningen

Circularity and arbitrariness

Engelsma, Coos

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:

2017

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Engelsma, C. (2017). *Circularity and arbitrariness: Responses to the epistemic regress problem*. [Thesis fully internal (DIV), University of Groningen]. Rijksuniversiteit Groningen.

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

Propositions belonging to

Circularity and Arbitrariness

Coos Engelsma

1. Peter Klein's work on the epistemic regress problem, infinitism, and the desiderata of avoiding circularity and arbitrariness is very fascinating, and fully deserves the ample attention it is given in the literature.
2. Foundationalism can avoid circularity and objective arbitrariness, but not subjective arbitrariness (Chapter 5).
3. Coherentism seems able to avoid circularity, but can succeed only if it allows subjective arbitrariness (Chapter 6).
4. None of the existing versions of infinitism, not even Klein's version, avoids subjective arbitrariness (Chapter 7).
5. If human beings cannot (or do not) hold infinitely many beliefs of ever-increasing complexity, then either they hold arbitrary beliefs or they hold beliefs on the basis of circular chains (or both) (Chapter 7).
6. Debates about foundationalism would benefit if contributors were first to reach agreement on what basic beliefs do not need for their justification.
7. It would be good if philosophers discussing the basing relation, or any other (causal) concept, were prohibited to use the adverb 'suitably'.
8. The fact that James Pryor's paper 'The Skeptic and the Dogmatist', published in *Noûs* in 2000, has become a much discussed and very often cited 'classic' in mainstream epistemology, while a position nearly identical to the one defended by Pryor had already been developed 26 years earlier by John Pollock in his book *Knowledge and Justification* from 1974 (Ch. 2, Sect. 3.4), in the same style and with a very similar motivation, may well give rise to oppressive feelings.
9. Good philosophy requires mental self-castigation.